

*Remarks of
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**Before the Education Committee
On Senate Bill 24, Section 28
Teachers Certification**

February 21, 2012

Good afternoon Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann, and members of the Education Committee of the Connecticut Legislature.

My name is Timothy Eaton-Koch, and I'm a first year art teacher at Stamford High School in the city of Stamford. I'm offering testimony today on Senate Bill 24, Section 28.

As a first year teacher, I would like to express to the committee my concern over proposed changes to the teacher certification system. Specifically, I'm concerned with changes in requirements that would eliminate a master's degree except for the master educator teacher certificate level. By modifying present requirements for all teachers I believe that there is a risk of devaluing current master's level qualified teachers.

Prior to joining the Stamford Public Schools, I earned my undergraduate and master's degree at the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD). I spent five years working rigorously to learn skills and content that I now share with my students on a daily basis. For my fifth year of study I was admitted to the Master of Arts in Teaching program where I studied curriculum development, developed best teaching practices, and completed student teaching at the primary and secondary levels.

Today, I feel I'm better prepared and more capable of sharing my vast content knowledge in the arts because I completed an advanced degree program. Working with high school students during my first year has proved to be a rewarding and challenging experience. I must constantly draw on the skills I learned in my advanced post under-graduate preparation to engage my students, whether it's learning how to use computer graphic software programs or how to visually communicate their ideas on paper. My advanced study in art has enabled me as a first year teacher to meet standards and be an effective teacher in the classroom.

I strongly urge the committee to reconsider Section 28 of Bill 24 so that the requirements for obtaining a master's degree are part of the professional preparatory and certification in teaching. I believe educators should complete advanced degrees of study to attempt to close the achievement gap and maintain high standards of education in the State of Connecticut. We need to encourage and support advanced degree study for all teachers.